

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 987

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

DIA WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 3042

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJ: SOCIAL ACTION PARTY MEMBER ON GOVERNMENT FORMATION

REF: BANGKOK 2860

SUMMARY: A RANKING MEMBER OF THE SOCIAL ACTION PARTY (SAP) RECENTLY SUGGESTED THAT EVENTS HAVE SIDETRACKED POST-ELECTION MANEUVERINGS BETWEEN SAP AND THAI NATION WHICH WOULD HAVE MADE KHUKRIT PRAMOT PRIME MINISTER. HE THOUGHT THAT THE DEMOCRATS, THUS, MAY BE ABLE TO ESTABLISH THEIR GOVERNMENT. HE ESTIMATED THAT A DEMOCRAT CABINET WOULD LAST SIX MONTHS. END SUMMARY.

1. PAUL SITTHI-AMNUAI, SAP OFFICIAL AND CONFIDANT OF PARTY SECRETARY-GENERAL BUNCHU ROTCHANASATHIAN, TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER FEBRUARY 20 THAT THE FEBRUARY 13 SELECTION OF DEMOCRAT PARTY LEADER SENI PRAMOT AS PRIME MINISTER-DESIGNATE UPSET SAP-THAI NATION PARTY PLANS WHICH WOULD HAVE MADE SAP LEADER KHUKRIT PRAMOT THE NEXT PRIME MINISTER. HE ALSO STATED THAT GENERAL KRIT SIWARA WAS AWARE OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS AND TOLD KHUKRIT AT ONE POINT
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THAT EVERYTHING WAS SETTLED. AS A RESULT, SAP CAST ITS VOTES

FOR SOCIAL NATIONALIST LEADER PRASIT KANCHANAWAT AS SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE ON FEBRUARY 3.

2. PARASIT PANICKED, HOWEVER, DURING THE FEBRUARY 13 MEETING AND ALLOWED THE DEMOCRATS TO FORCE AN OPEN VOTE WHICH RESULTED IN SENI'S SELECTION AS PRIME MINISTER. (THE CONSERVATIVES WANTED THE VOTE POSTPONED, AND SECRET.) SAP DECIDED TO VOTE FOR SENI WHEN IT SAW THE OPEN VOTE COMING AND THE CONSERVATIVE PARTIES IN DISARRAY.

3. PAUL FELT THAT, IF THE DEMOCRATS MANAGE TO MAKE THE FEBRUARY 27 VOTE OF CONFIDENCE AN OPEN VOTE, THEY WILL RECEIVE ENOUGH VOTES TO CONFIRM THEIR CABINET. HE SPECULATED, HOWEVER, THAT A CABINET RESHUFFLE WOULD COME WITHIN SIX MONTHS. PAUL DID NOT THINK THE DEMOCRATS WOULD COUNTER WITH NEW ELECTIONS, ALTHOUGH HE PERSONALLY FELT THAT NEW ELECTIONS WOULD INCREASE THE SIZE OF THE DEMOCRAT BLOC IN PARLIAMENT.

4. PAUL SAID THE POOR SAP SHOWING IN THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS HAD STUNNED SAP ORGANIZERS AND DAMPENED KHUKRIT'S ENTHUSIASM FOR THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP. ACCORDING TO PAUL, KHUKRIT WILL NOT NOW BE PARTY TO AN OVERT MOVE TO FORESTALL A DEMOCRAT GOVERNMENT, DESPITE HIS ACQUIESCENCE TO THE EARLIER MANEUVERING. THE CONSERVATIVES WILL HAVE TO STOP SENI WITHOUT SAP; BUT IF THEY SUCCEED, THEN KHUKRIT WOULD BE WILLING TO ACCEPT THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP FROM THEM, IF HIS BACKERS GUARANTEED AN OVERWHELMING NOMINATION VOTE IN THE PARLIAMENT. PAUL SAID THAT KHUKRIT IS AWARE OF THE POLITICAL RESTRICTIONS THAT HIS CONSERVATIVE BACKERS WOULD IMPOSE ON HIM AS PRIME MINISTER, BUT HE NONETHELESS WANTS THE JOB BADLY.

5. COMMENT: PAUL'S REMARKS SEEM TO CORROBORATE OTHER INFORMATION WE HAVE RECEIVED, AND SHED FURTHER LIGHT ON THE ACTIONS OF ONE OF THE KEY POLITICAL PARTIES AND PERSONALITIES. THE SITUATION REGARDING THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE WILL REMAIN FLUID RIGHT UP TO THE LAST POSSIBLE

MINUTE, AND EVEN THEN MAY CONTAIN SOME SURPRISES FOR THOSE WHO THINK THEY KNOW--OR HAVE ARRANGED FOR--WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN. KINTNER

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